

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4348

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 5535

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y

DEPARTMENT PASS IMMEDIATE USCINCAVEUR, COMSIXTHFLT,
DOD/ISA, CNO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI EG

SUBJECT: SUEZ CANAL CEREMONIES: USS LITTLE ROCK PARTICIPATION

REF: STATE 128798 (NOTAL); PARA 4 CAIRO 5347

1. AS OF 1500 LOCAL TODAY, NO ONE IN MFA, MINWAR
OR SCA COULD YET CONFIRM TO US THAT EGYPTIANS WILL
IN FACT MAKE AN ANNOUNCEMENT TODAY OR TOMORROW ON
LITTLE ROCK'S PARTICIPATION IN TOMORROW'S CEREMONIES.
ALTHOUGH GAMASY MENTIONED THE POSSBILITY TO ME A FEW
DAYS AGO (CAIRO REFTEL), I GATHER HE TOLD ALUSNA YESTERDAY
NO ANNOUNCEMENT WILL BE MADE. FOR PAST FEW DAYS
EGYPTIANS HAVE BEEN IN STATE OF UTTER CONFUSION GETTING READY
FOR SUEZ CANAL OPENING, AND MY GUESS IS THAT THEY HAVE
NOT FOCUSSED FURTHER ON THE MATTER OF ANNOUNCING LITTLE ROCK'S
PARTICIPATION. FONMIN'S CHEF DE CABINET, AL-BAZ,
HAS AGREED TO MAKE FURTHER INQUIRIES AND LET US KNOW
IF AN ANNOUNCEMENT IS TO BE MADE.

2. ASSUMING EGYPTIANS MAKE NO PRIOR ANNOUNCEMENT,
FACT OF LITTLE ROCK'S PARTICIPATION WILL BECOME
KNOWN TOMORROW MORNING. IF QUERIED AT THAT TIME BY
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DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES, AND OTHERS, I AM INSTRUCTION

EMBOFFS TO RESPOND THAT A) GOE ASKED FOR SUCH
PARTICIPATION A FEW DAYS AGO AND USG ACCEDED;
B) SINCE ORGANIZATION OF SUEZ REOPENING CEREMONIES
SOLELY MATTER FOR EGYPT TO DECIDE, USG SAW NO REASON
ASK IF OTHER FOREIGN WARSHIPS WOULD ALSO PARTICIPATE,
AND C) GOE DID INDICATE FOREIGN NAVAL VESSELS THAT
HAD ENGAGED IN SUEZ CANAL CLERANCE WOULD NOT
RPT NOT PARTICIPATE IN FORMAL OPENING CEREMONIES,
HENCE USS OPPORTUNE (LIKE BRITISH AND FRENCH MINE
HUNTERS) IS NOT A PARTICIPANT. BEYOND THIS, ANY
FURTHER QUERIES WILL BE REFERRED TO GOE FOR WHATEVER
REPLY IT CARES TO GIVE.
EILTS

NOTE BY OCT: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEES.

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